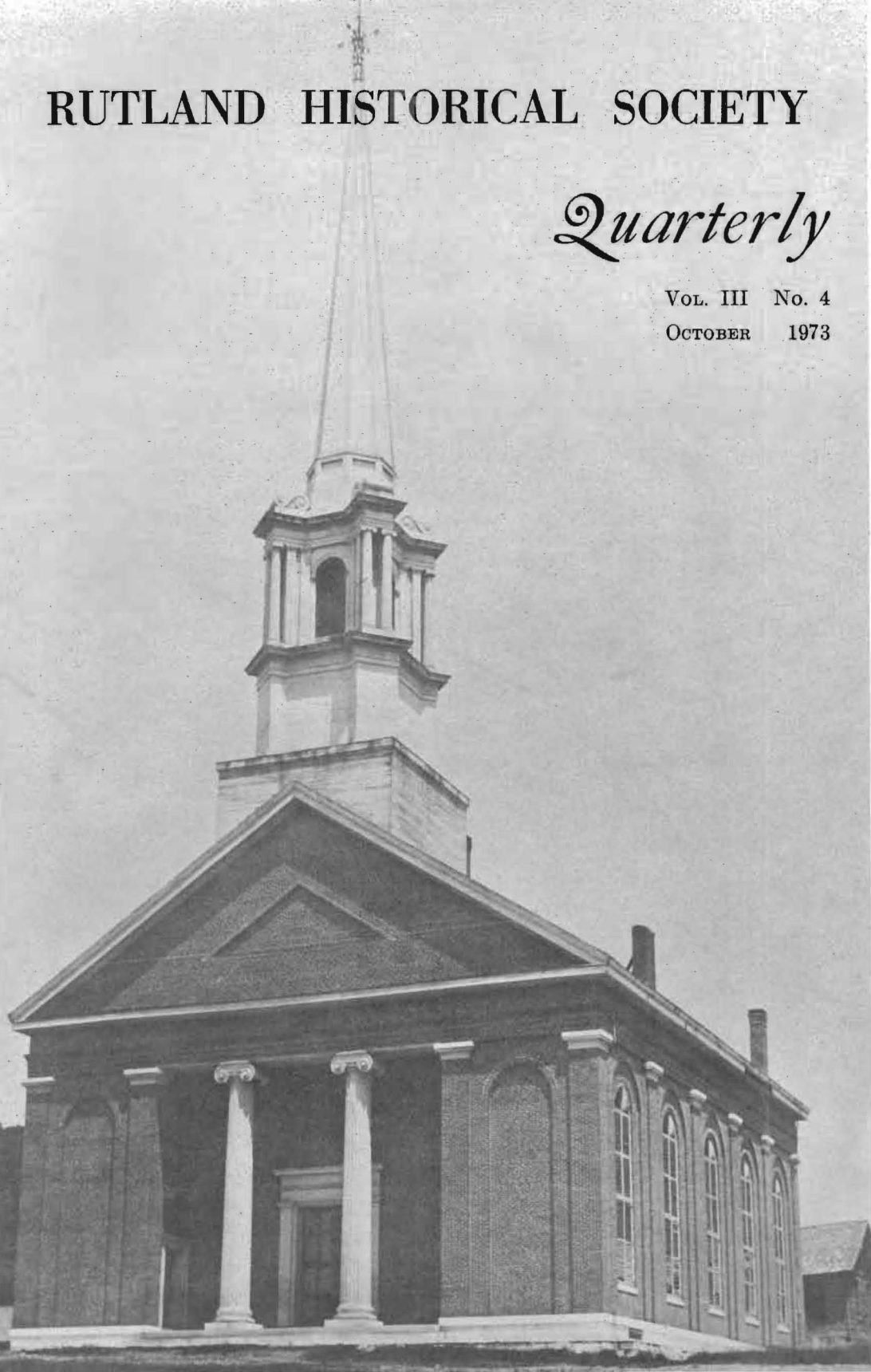


RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL NOTE

A casual glance at the cover of this issue shows two new things. We have omitted "Newsletter" from the title—because we did not wish to detract from the cover picture. Less obvious is that this is the first issue we have published in October. In short, this is a quarterly. This is the first Number Four the Society has published (the previous year's issues were limited to three numbers each). This is possible this year due to the generosity of Mrs. Earl S. Wright whose gift this spring was set aside for the express purpose of publishing in 1973 four issues of this periodical.

THE COVER

If the church on the cover does not appear familiar it is because the building was torn down about 1885. It is the third home of the religious congregation founded two hundred years ago, October 20, 1773, as the "First Church of Rutland." This issue is devoted in its entirety to the observance of this 200th anniversary of the first religious body organized in Rutland County, the second west of the Green Mountains (the first being the church at Bennington) and the tenth in the State. The designer of this graceful Greek Revival edifice is unknown but its date of construction is 1855.

Cover photo from the archives of the United Church, West Rutland. Thanks are also due Dr. Edith Blendon, Dorothy Covatt, James Davidson, Amelia Forbes Emerson, Phyllis Humphreys and Marvel Swan.

To the right we show the site of this church today, located directly opposite the monument shop at the lower end of Pleasant Street. The marble blocks, laid dry, are still true and solid today. Although the cellar hole is used as a dump for grass clippings and neighborhood trash a luxuriant growth of excellent quality timber reaches skyward from the moist rich soil. By actual inventory by a forester the volume present is 420 board feet (Vermont Rule) of sawlogs and 0.6 cords of hardwood pulpwood. The foundations enclose 60 by 80 feet or embrace an acreage of .11 acres. The volume per acre (3780 bd. ft. of logs and 5.5 cords of pulpwood) make what we claim to be the most heavily timbered cellar hole in Vermont, perhaps in New England.



Society treasurer George Covatt stands on the north-east corner of the porch foundation among the ash and sugar maples in the cellar hole.

Book Reviews

Lighthouse by Eugenia Price. N. Y.: Bantam Books, 1972. 344 pp.

Reviewed by Paul Douglass.

In her literary crusade to demonstrate that there exists a profitable public for inspirational fiction that joins a meticulous eye for historical detail and accuracy with the vigor, honesty, and passion of contemporary fiction, Eugenia Price (who lives and writes on St. Simons Island, Georgia) has woven the influence of Lemuel Haynes into the chronicle of New England-born James Gould who migrated to found a dynasty in the magnificent, untamed, post-Revolutionary South.

Here is the record of Deacon Rose who reared Haynes, of the citizens who dared like Haynes and the *Rulland Herald* to be Federalists in their support of George Washington, of the inner tug of a slave owner for human justice.

Eugenia Price writes fiction. Sometimes she takes liberty with historical fact to emphasize her point and purpose.

This fast-selling paperback is of interest to all persons concerned with American history and especially with the life of Lemuel Haynes. It is of special interest to critics of literature as a study of the Price method and purpose which has proved that Americans like this kind of wholesome and documented fiction.

Black Apostle to Yankeeland by Paul Douglass. Brandon, Vt. Privately printed. [16] 74 [6] pp., illus., spiral binding.

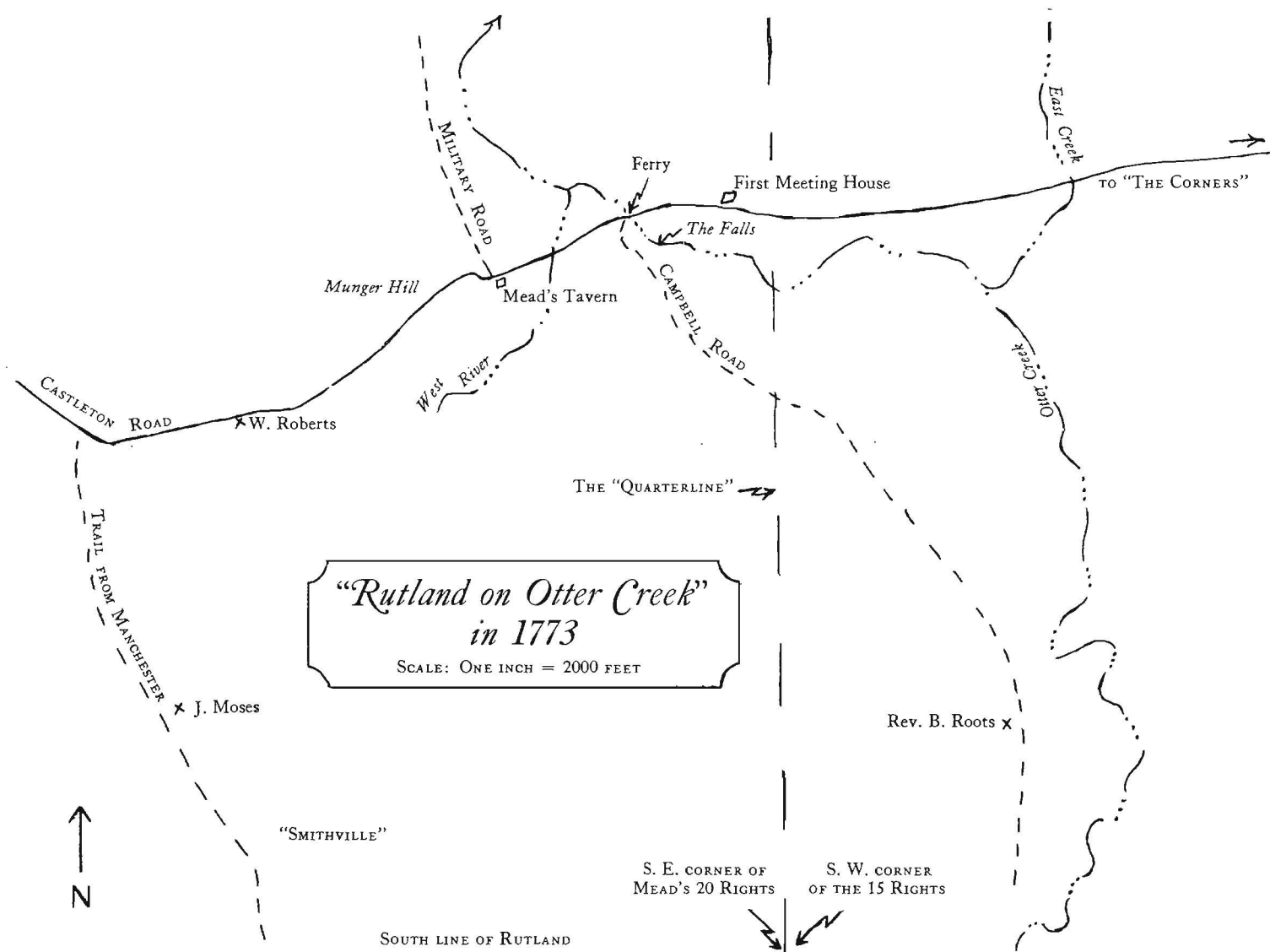
Reviewed by John E. Rogers, L. H. D.

In 1969, the editor of the Wesleyan University Press mailed me a copy of Timothy M. Cooley's *Life and Character of Rev. Lemuel Haynes A.M.* (1837) with a note asking my opinion as to the best way to handle the material for republication.

After much thought and rereading, I concluded that the best approach would be to isolate the sermons from the biography and publish two volumes. I returned the book with that suggestion and circled the sections that I felt should be biographical.

I should have realized, as Paul Douglass has displayed in his excellent and informative work, that the sermons and the man are inseparable. My enthusiasm to publicize Lemuel Haynes to black and white youth in Connecticut had dimmed my vision. The short but effective blending of Haynes' sermons into the biography by author Douglass lends an insight into the source of inspiration and determination that, despite his birth or racial handicaps, projected Haynes into colonial leadership. It might be noted here that by the discovery of a heretofore unpublished sermon brought to light by Gregor-Hileman in his article on Haynes in the spring (1973) issue of "Middlebury" ⁽¹⁾ we are able to refute the implication, in the recently printed novel *The Lighthouse*, that Haynes condoned slavery.

⁽¹⁾"Middlebury" is the alumni magazine of Middlebury College. A copy of this issue and copies of all books reviewed are in the Society's reference library. (ed.)



While Haynes shares the distinction of a Black Pastor ministering to whites in our early history with two others in the south before the Revolutionary War—George Liele in Augusta and Andrew Bryan in Savannah—in no instance does it appear that either had the intellectual attainment. A master of both Latin and Greek, a thinker, a former teacher in the Wintonbury, Connecticut, school, and a qualified minister in the Congregational church, Haynes is described by Hosea Beckett in his *History of Vermont* (Brattleboro, 1864) (in the chapter devoted to “Learned and Professional Men”) as a person with an “original and ingenious mind.”

But this alone, as Douglass so well points out, was not the sole reason for his marked success on the northern frontier. There is little doubt that he brought to Vermont or “New Connecticut,” as the down-river historians still call the early Green Mountain settlements, a combination of the philosophies of Timothy Dwight and James Otis.

The human personal warmth and his love of people were basic assets, as were his patience and his humility. These attributes played no small part in his achievements.

The issue of the Unitarian church is wisely skirted by Douglass, and well so, because the historians of that group are at present preparing a rebuttal to Haynes that will appear in the near future. The question of Haynes’ true parentage is expressed in the traditional manner, which is well until new findings can be further substantiated.

The title glossary will prompt a wry smile from many old-timers who still remember “court plaster” and “Meeting House.” This little volume has the potential to turn on black urban youth to the basic values in our system and at the same time rectify the white youths’ image of the black in early American history.

Paul Douglass, with his program initiated at Granville in 1972, has set into motion a new interest in Haynes. The result has been the article about him in the “Middlebury,” the resurrection of several Haynes letters in Connecticut, a new sermon in Vermont, and a reference and portrait of Haynes’ media in the August issue of “American Heritage.” This revival may soon bring new scholars to Granville, Bennington, Rutland, and Manchester in search of new materials.

FIRST PASTOR

The first pastor of the 200 year-old church now known as the United Church, West Rutland was Benajah Roots. What little we know of him today may be found on pages 25 to 29 of Chauncey K. Williams’ Centennial of the Founding of Rutland (Tuttle, 1970). Smith and Rann-History of Rutland County (Mason, 1886) pages 320 and 363 to 364, draw heavily on Williams and add a few additional facts culled from the land records.

Roots’ life as a pastor in Simsbury, Connecticut was shattered by his dismissal and, like the Rev. Samuel Williams some fifteen years later, came to the frontier to start life anew. He bought the Felix Powell homestead near the south end of the so-called Campbell Road in 1773 and on October 20 of that year was host to fourteen individuals who incorporated the first church. The log meeting house built some short time previously at Mead’s Falls (Center Rutland) served also as the church.

His ministry was uneventful and not particularly successful but one event in his life still draws interest today.

Dr. Rogers is consultant in Afro-American History at the University of Hartford.

WILLIAM EMERSON

by George Covalt

On October 20, 1776, the third anniversary of the Church in Rutland, Rev. Roots closed the eyes of his house guest William Emerson, Pastor of the Church in Concord, Massachusetts.

Born July 11, 1743 in Malden, Massachusetts and graduated from Harvard in 1761, William Emerson became Pastor in Concord in 1765 and August 21, 1766 married Miss Phebe Bliss, daughter of his predecessor in that pulpit. By that time he was an energetic, well-known young minister, exchanging pulpits with many other ministers, preaching throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire and southern Maine.

[Our knowledge of him is not complete. A pamphlet "A Chaplain of the Revolution" by his great-grandson, Edward Waldo Emerson, was published by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1922. In 1972 Edward Waldo's daughter-in-law, Amelia Forbes Emerson, published privately a source-book containing those of William's diaries that have been found (1764, 1766-1769 inclusive, 1775 and eight months of 1776), his letters to his wife, a few of his sermons, and other information available, in chronological order under the title "Diaries and Letters of William Emerson" on which this account is based.—⁽¹⁾]

As early as 1770 William's letters to his wife show that he was a Son of Liberty; but his wife's family was split, two brothers patriots and two royalists. When the local militia organized William became Chaplain, and the Provincial Congress met in Concord in October 1774 and chose him to act as their Chaplain.

⁽¹⁾These two works were presented to the Society by Mrs. Emerson and are on the reference shelves. In August Mrs. Emerson visited with Dorothy and George Covalt and the editor at the Museum and as a result of the meeting substantial clarification of the facts and traditions in the Emerson-Roots subject was attained.



Chaplain Emerson



Headstone and grave of Rev. Roots, Pleasant Street Cemetery. Is grassy plot to right of his stone the grave of Chaplain Emerson?



Philosopher Emerson. He visited Rutland and Julia C. R. Dorr. Did he find his grandfather's grave?

Wax portrait of William Emerson from Concord Library, courtesy Mrs. Raymond Emerson.

The next to last entry in William's diary is August 4, 1776: "Preached. After public exercises took a vote of the Church & Town when the people expressed their will that I should go as Chaplain into the Continental Army, and they to supply the pulpit." William left his home August 16, 1776 a few days after the Concord company left for Fort Ticonderoga. He reached the fort August 25 or 26. Early in September he fell ill of "camp fever" and September 18, on advice of the physicians, applied for and received dismissal and started for home. Reaching Rutland September 23, and unable to travel further, he stayed at the home of Rev. Benajah Roots until his death. Roots' praiseful letter to the church in Concord October 21, 1776, tells of William's "unexampled patience" while ill, his death October 20 and military burial the 21st.

We wish we were sure where William was buried. The earliest cemetery in Rutland was a plot conveyed to the Town in 1784; ⁽²⁾so presumably William was buried in 1776 on Roots' farm (now the Billings farm). Roots' body lays in Pleasant Street Cemetery in what is now West Rutland; this was conveyed to the Church in 1787 by William Roberts. ⁽³⁾Roberts died in November 1788 and his body is supposed to be the first buried in that cemetery, so presumably Roots was first buried on the farm where he died in 1787. An oral tradition quoted by Prof. James D. Butler (State Historical Society of Wisconsin) ⁽⁴⁾says William Emerson's son, Rev. William Emerson, Jr. (Pastor of a Church in Boston) visited Rutland in 1791 and found his father's body next to Roots'. From these presumptions one can conclude that Roots' body, and Emerson's, were disinterred from the farm and buried in Pleasant Street Cemetery sometime between 1788 and 1791. This conclusion would be strengthened if we could confirm the tradition that William Jr. found his father's body near Roots' in 1791. We have found nothing in the Church records about Emerson. Whether the personal records of Rev. Lemuel Haynes, Pastor from 1788 to 1818, tell of an Emerson visit we don't now know.

William Emerson's journeys to and from Ticonderoga were of course on a military road which, from Charlestown, N. H. to beyond Rutland, was the old Crown Point Road. The Rutland Church in 1776 was on Crown Point Road in what is now Center Rutland and Roots' home was a few miles south. Emerson on both journeys must have noted the Church; he may even have visited Roots on his northward journey (described probably in his letter numbered 9, which is missing). The space beside Roots' grave is unmarked; it seems probably that Emerson's remains are there.

So far we have found no separate confirmation of the Butler tradition of William Jr.'s visit. That tradition includes some statements (not repeated here) which recent studies prepare us to contradict, so we are reluctant to accept a statement coming only from there. One reason for discussing this in such detail is the hope that some reader may have, and will disclose to us, independent confirmation of the story of William, Jr.'s visit, or other information about William Sr.'s burial.

⁽²⁾RLR. Book 2, page 232. Col. James Mead to Town of Rutland.

⁽³⁾RLR. Book 17, page 387. Wm. Roberts and Wm. Roberts, Jr. to the West Church and Congregation in Rutland. October 30, 1787.

⁽⁴⁾Typed copies of the letters of Butler to E. W. Emerson are on file at the Museum.